

SENATOR PIRSCH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and members of the Legislature, this is another attempt to find some alternatives to our overcrowded prisons. And LB 399 provides that any person sentenced to a city or a county jail upon conviction of a misdemeanor, felony, contempt or nonpayment of any fine or forfeiture may be granted the privilege, and this is strictly to the judge's prerogative, of serving all or part of any sentence under house arrest. House arrest means that that offender is restricted to a specific residence except for the authorized periods of absence for employment or for a medical, educational or other reasons approved by the court. Now house arrest may be monitored by electronic surveillance systems and those, of course, include again, bracelets and ankle bracelets, also the voice imaging that we talked about earlier. The advantages, of course, of house arrest are that they ease prison overcrowding, they are flexible, they can be used to cover particular times of day or particular types of offenders. There is less...it's a less expensive way to manage existing or increasing numbers of offenders while still appearing to be safe for those victims and in the 1980s, as I told you briefly in the bill before, technology associated with electronic surveillance systems has dramatically improved and that leads to house arrests increasingly being coupled with those systems, and this technology can solve several complex interrelated supervision problems and can take the place oftentimes of the people intensive surveillance. For example, failure on probation or parole may be caused by being in the wrong place with the wrong associates and to control that you can put the offender on electronic surveillance which will reduce the opportunities for undesirable contacts and new crime opportunities. I think the public can feel safe with these electronic devices and, of course, with the monitoring and the supervision that goes along with the house arrest. We cannot do, of course, without the staff and the equipment working together to keep these offenders in their homes, but still under control. With that I would move LB 399 to Final.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you. Discussion, Senator Hannibal.

SENATOR HANNIBAL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the bill and I don't mean to take up a lot of time because we are on Select File. I only wanted to point out that some of our committee findings in our report suggested we have some serious problems with the populations in the state penal system and as a